

## REQUEST FOR INFORMATION TURNAROUND MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

### OVERVIEW

This is a Request for Information (“**RFI**”) issued by the Indiana Department of Education (“**IDOE**”). IDOE is currently in the process of implementing Indiana’s *Fast Forward* plan, available at [www.doe.in.gov/fastforward](http://www.doe.in.gov/fastforward).

This RFI seeks responses for the administration of the *Fast Forward* Turnaround Management Organization (“**TMO**”).

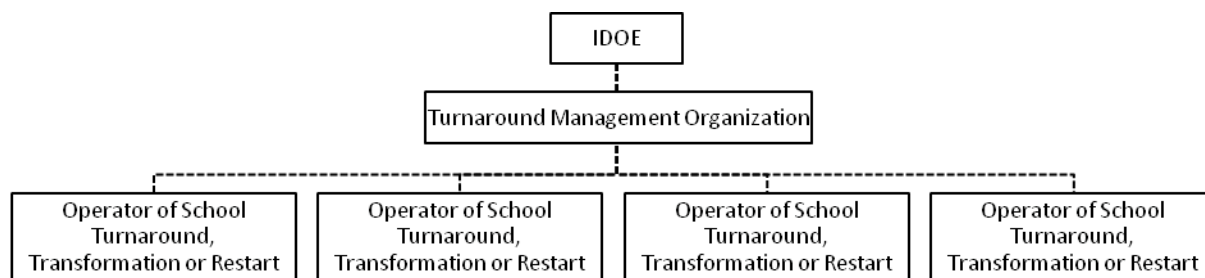
### BACKGROUND

As a cornerstone of *Fast Forward*, IDOE has embarked on a bold effort to turn around the state’s lowest-achieving schools. Although Indiana has made significant strides in recent years to improve outcomes for students in these schools, significantly more remains to be done. Twenty-three schools will be eligible for state oversight in 2011. Without courageous action, many more schools may be subject to direct intervention in future years.

Indiana’s leaders have a profound sense of urgency to bring about swift and dramatic improvements in these schools. IDOE is working to align its overall turnaround strategy with those of the United States Department of Education (“**ED**”), consistent with the requirements of Race to the Top, 1003(g) School Improvement Grants (“**SIG**”) and proposals for Elementary and Secondary Education Act (“**ESEA**”) reauthorization.

Critical to this turnaround strategy are TMOs, external non-profit or for-profit organizations with which IDOE will contract to implement and oversee dramatic improvement strategies in eligible schools. With support from IDOE, TMOs will have authority to contract with carefully selected school operators or school leaders to carry out dramatic school-level interventions (see Figure 1).

*Figure 1. Accountability for School Improvement: Turnaround Management Organizations*



### PURPOSE

The objective of this RFI is to receive information from respondents regarding their capacity to serve as TMOs and assume responsibility for implementing and overseeing turnarounds and restarts in schools on track for direct state takeover in 2011-12. Through this RFI, IDOE is seeking responses from external non-profit and for-profit organizations interested in taking part in Indiana’s *Fast Forward* plan by serving in the TMO role.

**Proposed Responsibilities.** TMOs will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of dramatic interventions in a subset of schools eligible for state takeover beginning in 2011. Although the list of schools will not be finalized until summer 2011, IDOE anticipates up to twenty-three schools will be eligible for direct oversight. These schools will then be required to implement the turnaround, transformation or restart model as described below:

- *Turnaround:* Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50% of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- *Restart:* Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- *Transformation:* Replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness; institute comprehensive instructional reforms; increase learning time and create community-oriented schools; and provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

The TMO will be responsible for selecting an intervention model for each school it oversees and entering into an agreement with the school (whether by contract, charter or direct operation) to carry out the improvement strategy. Where the TMO plans to contract with a restart provider, it will be responsible for identifying, selecting and contracting with high-quality providers.

In its contract with IDOE, the TMO will also gather and report data to IDOE about interim and annual school-level results, as well as information about leading indicators of success and failure. IDOE will also require TMOs to develop a plan to act swiftly when leading indicators suggest school improvement efforts are not on track to succeed. Finally, each TMO will propose and establish a community engagement strategy to help build support for dramatic change in the schools it oversees.

**IDOE Supports.** To support dramatic improvements in low-performing schools, IDOE is committed to empowering school operators and TMOs with the types of autonomy that research and experience suggest the most capable providers require, including freedom from traditional state and local regulations and agreements such as those governing school staffing, curricula, instructional approach, scheduling and budgeting. IDOE contracts will also ensure that the TMO receives full per-pupil funding for schools it agrees to manage.

IDOE will also pursue initiatives to build the supply of school operators and turnaround leaders to support TMOs and foster dramatic improvement in low-performing schools. Plans include incubating high-quality providers that can restart in previously failing schools and open new schools and building a pipeline of leaders who are prepared to lead transformative school change.

IDOE proposes to ask applicants to state in the application or proposal what portion of total funding they are willing to put “at risk,” i.e., for the state to reserve and distribute only if the TMO meets agreed-upon performance criteria each year. IDOE is not proposing to make this a selection criterion, but would request the information to help ensure that contracts are performance-focused

and reward TMOs (and accordingly, the schools they oversee) that significantly improve student learning.

### **SOLICITATION OF PRESENTATIONS**

Before accepting proposals for review in accordance with the usual procurement procedures for the State, IDOE is soliciting feedback from potential respondents to a Request for Proposal (“RFP”) regarding the information presented in this RFI. IDOE will consider any information received in response to this RFI in the solicitation for services. IDOE reserves the right to request clarifications on information submitted to the State. IDOE also reserves the right to conduct discussions, either oral or written, with respondents. These discussions could include request for additional information, request for cost or technical proposal revision, etc. Additionally, in conducting discussions, the State may use information derived from proposals submitted by competing respondents only if the identity of the respondent providing the information is not disclosed to others. The State will provide equivalent information to all respondents that have been chosen for discussions. Discussions, along with negotiations with responsible respondents, may be conducted for any appropriate purpose.

### **OBJECTIVE**

IDOE is seeking feedback on the information in this RFI, as well as preliminary information from respondents about their interest and capacity to serve in the TMO role. IDOE will consider any information received in response to this RFI in the construction of an RFP soliciting TMO services.

### **SPECIFIC NEEDS**

There will not be a contract resulting directly from this RFI, but respondents to this RFI will be placed on the list of potential respondents and will receive an announcement of any RFP that may arise from this RFI. The RFP process will be open to all respondents regardless of their decision to participate in this RFI.

IDOE seeks creative, high-level responses to the RFI components. IDOE is especially interested in receiving the following information from each respondent:

- The respondent’s qualifications and related experience necessary to meet the TMO responsibilities, outlined above;
- The respondent’s experience in managing schools, especially high schools;
- Evidence demonstrating that the respondent has produced results against aggressive targets;
- Costs associated with staffing and carrying out the activities of the TMO, including centralized and anticipated school-level costs;
- Indication of respondent’s interest in allowing a portion of state funds to be reserved and distributed when the TMO meets agreed-upon performance criteria each year; and
- Feedback or suggestions about the TMO role and proposed IDOE initiatives to support the TMO’s work, as described above.

### **RESPONSES**

Respondents shall submit **one** original soft copy (CD-ROM) and **four** hard copies of the written response to

Dale Chu  
Indiana Department of Education  
151 West Ohio Street  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Responses must be received no later than **4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on Friday, May 7, 2010.** The outside of the package (envelope or box) should be clearly marked as follows:

**“RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION – TURNAROUND MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION”**

Any questions regarding this RFI shall be submitted via email to [fastforward@doe.in.gov](mailto:fastforward@doe.in.gov) no later than **4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 16, 2010.** Responses to all questions will be promptly prepared, and a copy of each question and answer will be posted to the *Fast Forward* page of the IDOE website: [www.doe.in.gov/fastforward](http://www.doe.in.gov/fastforward).

**Inquiries are not to be directed to any staff member of IDOE; inquiries may only be directed to the listed email address.**

Responses will be considered public information once an RFP is complete. If an RFP is not undertaken, the responses are considered public once the decision is made.

Please note that the single point of contact for this RFI is [fastforward@doe.in.gov](mailto:fastforward@doe.in.gov).

Please note that the usual and customary procedures for selecting a vendor (issuance of an RFP) may follow this RFI. The process will be open to all providers irrespective of their participation or non-involvement in this information-gathering process.